

URBAN INDIAN EDUCATION IN MINNEAPOLIS:
AN INTERIM ANALYSIS OF SURVEY MATERIALS
GATHERED FROM SCHOOL OFFICIALS AND
INFLUENTIAL PERSONS

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by

Arthur M. Harkins

I. Karon Sherarts

Richard G. Woods

Training Center for
Community Programs
in coordination with the
Office of Community Programs
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs

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Introduction

As a part of its responsibilities for conducting research under the auspices of the National Study of American Indian Education, the University of Minnesota's Training Center for Community Programs carried out survey research in two Minneapolis schools--an elementary school and a junior high. As a further aspect of its responsibilities, the Training Center was required to conduct questionnaire surveys and interviews with "influential persons" who were active in the context of formal education in Minneapolis.

This interim report initially analyzes the data obtained by the questionnaires and interviews conducted with influential persons important to formal education functions in Minneapolis. At the time when data gathering was underway for this purpose(Spring, 1969), there was much tumult in the air over whether urban Indian education programs in the Twin Cities should be conducted inter-racially or "by Indians for Indians". Some of the data which will be presented in the pages that follow directly and indirectly reflect the tremendously important issue--then and now-- of the control of Indian education. Then and now, the question essentially boiled down to this: should formal public (and other) systems of education relinquish control over the education of Indian children to the "Indian Community"? There are many other ways of stating the question, of course, but in many ways this vernacular way of putting the issue is the one probably closest to the emotional heart of the matter, since the "Indian community" is so very often slighted as the "proper" locus for control of all Indian matters. For harried school officials in Minneapolis, the issue of the locus of control over Indian education had reached the proportions of frequent demands for "all Indian" schools -- to include the full range of formal education from kindergarten through high school.

This interim report seeks to explore in detail the responses of influential persons in Minneapolis to many issues surrounding the educa-

tion of the city's Indian children. Essential to most of the issues, even if very subtle much of the time, is the question of legitimacy in the provision for, conduct and evaluation of Indian-oriented formal education enterprises.

Attitudes of Influential Persons at Spencer (pseudonym) Elementary School

Two influential people, the principal and a social worker-nurse, were interviewed at Spencer. Both were in their fifties and held M.A. degrees. The principal played an active role in selecting Spencer personnel, determining curriculum content and constructing the budget for his school:

The amount of control in these matters varies from principal to principal. I was extremely active. I did not want a staff person I had not interviewed. I was involved in various things, helping them understand the type of community, what they could expect teaching here, needs of the families. I took a leadership role and was constantly encouraging experimentation, with a positive attitude. The budget is open-ended. Teachers had a say in how the budget was used. This is a loaded question.

("Do you determine school policies, enrollment, school grades?")

I don't want to respond; the question is mixed. The responsibility for the school calendar lies with the school board.

(There was no data on the social worker-nurse's involvement in these areas.)

Spencer's Effectiveness with Indian Students

Two varying positions on the goals of education for Indian children expressed by Spencer influential people. Only one actually evaluated the school's success in achieving these goals. A respondent described the goals of Indian education:

They are not markedly different from the goals for any other school--to help kids prepare for society. They are a minority, they need to be able to compete. A poor education lessens their chances of coping competitively.

He felt Spencer was not successfully meeting the needs of Indian children nor preparing them to compete in urban society.

I suppose there are some examples of Indian kids doing well. It is tragic that we haven't been able to do more. I don't say they have to accept our standards, but they have to accept society's value structures to some degree and incorporate them into their lives in order to compete and sustain themselves. Another problem is for them to see the importance of accepting the curriculum as such, as giving tools to enable them to live in society.

A different educational goal -- orienting Indian students to accept some white "ways" but enabling them to remain predominately identified with "Indian ways" -- was expressed by the second respondent. She felt this goal was currently reflected in Spencer's policies and described her personal opinion. Although she did not evaluate the school's success in achieving this goal, she felt that Indian students did not like school and needed more motivation (especially from home) to increase their school achievement.

Schools Proposed Relationship to Tribal Language and Culture

In the opinion of its influential people, Spencer's policy toward Indians was no different from its policy toward non-Indians. They viewed the essential responsibility of the school as "giving them the tools that enable them to live in society, or educating them to fit into society." Although the staff recognized the existence of Indian cultures, they made no efforts to enhance or undermine its meaning to Indian children. Those interviewed felt the study of Indian life should be included in the Spencer curriculum:

It should definitely be included as part of the development of the country. No Minorities should be expected to be segregated as far as history, it should not be taken out of context.

The other informant suggested the addition of courses dealing with local Indian history and culture; she also thought existing courses (math, reading, etc.) should use some local cultural materials as subject matter.

According to data from one respondent, Indian languages should not be a part of the school's curriculum.

Assessment of the Problems of Minneapolis Indian People and of Indian Children in the School System

Influential people regarded the principal problems of Indian education as lack of parental involvement in education, poverty, difficulties in acculturating (including identity problems, poor self-images, value conflicts between home and school, and difficulty in relating to whites), and a high rate of tardiness and absenteeism. One respondent felt the difficulties in educating Indian children centered around:

A conflict of values; they may not realize the conflict, for example, in time.

It's hard for these people to grasp this and adjust to this. The prime factor is that it is hard to get parental involvement. But it's hard for whites and blacks, too. One thing is clear, they don't relate well to whites. Acculturation is difficult. They are struggling for identity. Basic nature works against them concerning acculturation. It's hard to retain the strides they've made. There are two key factors which cause problems in school : 1.) a high rate of tardiness -- the time factor again -- it mitigates against children making progress; and 2.) absenteeism -- they don't recognize it is a detriment to achievement.

The second respondent discussed her impressions of the Indian situation. The major problems of Indian people are:

Lack of feeling of self-worth, lack of income and use of it, adjustment to the city. Absences and tardiness also create problems. It has been our experience that Indian children are like any others. They are neither better or worse. Some are shy, some are aggressive. Most do not like school. The parents want the children to learn, but the parents do not involve themselves by and large in school affairs even when invited. If a parent wants to see a child's work, etc., that child is usually a good student. If a child is not encouraged and supervised, that child is a problem. Children who are unsupervised and unencouraged in the early grades rarely develop a liking for school. Many Indian children live more for today rather than planning for the future. They have no long term goals. Many Indian parents do not get their children off to school. They are expected to go on their own. However, if a child does not go to school, the parents are concerned and call to check. However, by this time they have lost control over their child. We do not have these kinds of problems with Indian families who have control and supervision of their children.

School - Community Relations

Extent and Value of Parental Contact

The influential people at Spencer met with Indian parents "quite often" to discuss problems concerning Indian children. A more in-depth relationship was experienced between the social-worker-nurse and her clients; the principal generally was not involved in actually working with families to effect viable solutions to individual problems. While both respondents had experienced initial difficulty in communicating with Indian parents, they felt parents were sincerely concerned about their children and cooperative:

I've met many parents, usually the mother or the father, we talk about school related problems, I'm a nurse, medication, etc. I've been in their homes to take a sick child home, gather data, and for friendly visits. The area has poor housing, and is over-priced rental property. I encounter the whole range of problems from please fix my cut to I want to run away from home. At first the parents were suspicious, later they were accepting and cooperative. (Indians are very anxious for their children to do well in school, and want to help them. However, the family background of Indian children is not supportive of their learning in school.)

I talk to parents quite often. Some are involved in school functions, and we have an Indian teacher's aide. Are parents concerned? Yes, they are sincerely concerned. They do not express their concern as freely and openly as whites. There may be some who are more concerned. Problems are handled by the social worker. I hear about tardiness, absenteeism, or aggressive behavior from the teacher. To solve the problem we have to recognize related factors. I strongly believe in working with parents, which is a problem, especially to find ways you can relate to parents. It is a communication problem, but we must work with the total family.

Perception of Indian Influence on Spencer's Policies

Both respondents felt the southside Indian community had very little influence on Spencer's program and policies. The situation existed for two reasons -- parent's reluctance to become involved and the school's ineffectiveness in involving them.

I don't feel there is sufficient involvement of Indian people. There is some, but there should be more. Communication should be open and understanding. We must make them realize the necessity of being able to compete. Indians are not involved in curriculum development, but rather in seeing how their kids are fitting in--that is relevant.

Parents do not involve themselves by and large in school affairs even when invited. Indians have been used to demonstrate artifacts, dance and crafts and as aides.

Although Spencer's influential people had met and discussed education-related problems with Indian parents, neither had met with Indian groups or education officials (at state or city levels) to discuss mutual problems related to educating American Indian children: "I've only talked to Indians on a one-to-one relationship, not formally".

The principal had met with "group action committees" in the metropolitan area and felt these organizations and the Minneapolis Board of Education were quite responsive to the desires and demands of Indian people:

There are group action committees. I've served on a number of these. There are quite a few. To some degree they are responsive to Indians' desires and demands. For example, they might like to see some culture-thing retained, e.g., bow and arrow, but what practical use is there for such a thing? Our Board of Education should be commended, and the Department of Urban Affairs for relating to the community. This has all happened quite fast, and there is probably more of it in the cities than in small towns.

Attitudes toward Local Control of Education

Although both respondents felt Indian parents should be more involved in school affairs, neither felt the control of schools should be shared equally between the local community (composed of Indians and non-Indians) and professional educators. One respondent emphasized the necessity for parents to increase their knowledge of the educational system and its functions prior to their involvement in school affairs; moreover, he implied an additional qualification was required, i.e., acceptance of the educational philosophy that Indians should become educated to fit into society.

There may be sharp differences in what they view as necessary for their children. Informal education may be more important than formal. This is very important to remember about people like this.

And to what extent should Indian Parents be involved?

They must be committed and take the responsibility of becoming knowledgeable before becoming involved. There must be more depth of involvement that I've seen; for example, they wanted money for one child to visit an Indian tribe somewhere else to see how they're getting along. How can we justify this? I can't. I don't think this is essential to their becoming educated to fit into society.

Ideas for Improving Indian Education

Both influential people strongly endorsed special training for teachers of Indian children, because it would enable teachers to "understand the cultural background of Indians." One commented:

It (special training) is very necessary. (It could be) pre-service or inservice, there are many different ways to do it--work in the community, the inclusion of history, development of people. But if it is required, what value is it if they teach in a community where there are no people of this type?

They also felt Indian parents should be considerably more involved in school affairs:

There has to be involvement, open lines of communication. We haven't had this.

One respondent offered several additional suggestions designed to improve Indian education:

We should have some Indian teachers, but, the classes should not be all Indian. I don't favor this. It is an excellent way for minority to inter-mix and gain insight into society.

By all means (there should be adult education classes). The courses should vary considerably, it depends on what they want.

Not enough Indians attend college. They drop out. Why? We don't know! We're searching for an answer. I suspect we'll find a multiple, broad-based program to prevent it.

We get federal title monies and the inner city schools must continue to have them.

He definitely opposed the establishment of an all-Indian high school, dismissing it as "not desirable for Indian children." The respondent felt the problems of Indian education would be solved if reservations were abolished:

Do you force them to do it without them being able to say anything about it? How do you go about doing it? We want to help them. The reservation has become an escape from reality. It is not a society as such. It exists at the expense of these people learning to cope with society. I don't see any other way of resolving the problem except to abolish the reservations.

Background Data From Scofield (pseudonym) Junior High School

Six of Scofield's influential people were interviewed, and completed the questionnaire. The respondents had varied relationships to the Indian children: an authoritarian relationship was represented by two assistant principals and the principal; a more helpful and empathic relationship was characterized by a guidance counselor and half-time group worker; and a unique relationship to Indian youth and their education was provided by the Indian Upward Bound program and its Chippewa Director.

Five of the interviewees were female. Most respondents ranged in age from twenty-nine to thirty-five; one male was sixty-four. In regard to education five respondents had masters degrees (four of these had accumulated additional credits) and one had obtained a B.S. degree.

Influential people had an excellent knowledge of the school system and its operations. All of them experienced extensive contacts with teachers, but (with one exception) more limited contact with Indian students, their parents, and the Southside Indian Community. None of the respondents or teachers at Scofield lived in neighborhoods from which the school's population was drawn.

Theoretically, the principals, especially the head principal, had the most influence in determining school policies, hiring teachers and making decisions directly affecting the lives of Indian youth (suspensions, etc.). Unfortunately, our data did not delineate the degree of autonomy in Scofield's daily functions, or the areas which were controlled by its administration, or those under the jurisdiction of the central administration.

Influential people agreed that Scofield was not effectively meeting the needs of its Indian population. In fact, they evaluated the school as almost completely unsuccessful with Indian youth.

An important issue in Indian education is the relationship between the educational system and Indian identity. Influential people assessed this relationship at Scofield. Two regarded Scofield emphasis as orienting Indian students to lose their Indian identity and to merge into white urban culture (one person felt this attitude was "unconscious"). A less vehement assimilation position was detected by a respondent who felt Scofield policy was attempting to orient Indian youth to respect some Indian ways, but encouraging them to change predominately toward white ways. Another person described the school's position as orienting Indian students to combine both ways.

Personal attitudes were less assimilation -oriented. One respondent felt it was necessary for Indian students to respect some Indian ways, but equally necessary for them to change predominately toward white ways. Two influential people expressed the "man of two cultures" view; two felt Indians should accept some white ways, but maintain dominant identification with Indian ways. Uncertainty was indicated by two people, who felt the latter two positions best reflected their attitudes.

	<u>Own</u> <u>Opinion</u>	<u>Schools</u> <u>Opinion</u>
1. Orient Indian students to slowly lose identification with the Indian ways to assure adaptation to white ways of doing things.		2
2. Orient Indian students to respect some Indian ways, yet to change predominately toward the white ways.	1	1
3. Orient Indian students to combine both ways.	2	1
4. Orient Indian students to accept some white ways, but to remain predominately identified with Indian ways.	1	
5. Positions 3 and 4	2	

When asked if Indians should become completely assimilated only one respondent agreed, another was undecided, but 67% (4) disagreed.

The Indian people should become completely assimilated with the larger American society.

<u>Agree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>
1	1	1	3

Including Indian Culture in the Curriculum

Data from three influential people indicated minimal efforts were made to include aspects of Indian culture in Scofield's curriculum.

Indian Upward Bound teaches this (Indian culture). [Note: IUB is not part of the school curriculum or school system.] Art classes do bead work, there are displays of Indian work in the halls.

(Some classes do) beadwork and discuss the customs of Chippewa Sioux and of other Indian tribes.

Indian youth enjoy social studies when they are studying Indian cultures or when they have an opportunity to explain their culture.

In contrast, all respondents felt the curriculum should include courses dealing with Indian history and culture. One person discussed the positive affects such classes, including language, would have on both Indian and non-Indian students.

I think one of the reasons (having courses on Indian history and culture) is not only to educate the white person why certain things happened, why the Indian is in this position today, but to point out some of the positive things that the Indian has done, and also so the Indian youth in the school can also find something that he can be proud of, as far as self-identification is concerned. He is an Indian and he knows this, he's always going to be an Indian and instead of people looking down on him all the time, and he feels people are looking down on him, if he can be positive about himself and what he is, I'm sure that this would help a lot as far as the student's continuing in school.

Do you think that it should be a course that's offered every year on Indian culture and history, or do you think that it should be incorporated in some other way?

I think that possibly it could be developed over a period of years, different categories as far as Indian history or culture is concerned and have the people or students taking part in certain projects and get them to understand it better. I think a one-year, or a one-shot program is not enough, for the Indian student or for the White student.

Do you think that some of the Indian languages should be taught at Scofield?

I think that as far as identification purposes it would be well if this was taught. It gives the student something that he can call his own.....and if he does learn it, some accomplishment that he can have behind him.

Most influential people (5) felt on-going courses (i.e. math, English, art, etc.) should make efforts to use local Indian materials as subject matter. One respondent was undecided.

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Unde-</u> <u>cided</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
There should be courses in the curriculum which teach the local Indian history and culture	4	2			
Courses such as math, reading, English, etc., should use local cultural materials as subject matter.	2	3	1		

School-Community Relations

All influential people had opportunities to meet Indian parents in situations where educational problems confronting their children were discussed. A few had talked with parents at PTA, IUB and at community meetings. Four respondents had visited Indian homes; however, only one person had social contacts with the families:

I've met quite a few parents almost always it's about discipline problems, but I have met them at PTA, concerned parents, IUB, and we hire parents for hall marshalls. I interviewed five or six parents and hired one. Daily I walk around the area and talk to people but I don't have a great deal of contact with them. They are reluctant and don't volunteer to come. The only time we call them is when there is trouble. They have home problems. Crowded living conditions, broken homes, drinking problems. They come in feeling they're picked on. They have to be persuaded that it's normal and and that we want to help. There is also prejudice in the community and among teachers. Often we are a buffer between the parents and the teacher. Contacts must be cleared in the office, it's an administrative policy, problems must go to the office first.

I've met parents here at school on school business and I have met some on the street, at the Centers and in community action. I've visited Indian homes to discuss discipline problems with them. I've been to the Indian centers many times and have a small involvement in community action.

I make home visits sometimes in relation to attendance problems. I try to make the first contact with parents as positive as possible. Powwows, I always go to as many as I can.

There is a big gap in communications between the school and the Indian community. You find very few of the parents attending certain functions of the school, or trying to get involved with the school. I think it's a two-way street, not only parents getting involved, but I think the schools themselves should get involved with the communities in trying to have special programs for the adults. The school has made very little effort to do this.

It was difficult to assess the influential person's perception of parental concern for education. A questionnaire provided minimal data for five respondents. One person considered the Indian child's family background as supportive of formal education; another felt it was not, and three were undecided. Half regarded Indian parents as very anxious for their children to learn, while sixty-seven percent (4) were convinced that Indian parents "wanted to help their children succeed in school."

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	<u>Neither</u>
Indians are very anxious for their children to learn at school	3		2
Indian parents want to help their children in school	4		1
The family background of Indian children is supportive of their learning in school	1	1	3

A respondent (for whom there was no questionnaire data) thoroughly assessed parental concern for education and their apprehensions.

Well, they [parents] are concerned and as far as a program is concerned, they are involved, but as far as the school structure is concerned, I would say that they are very apprehensive about getting involved and possibly the reason that could be they don't know how or what means to follow to get involved with the schools. They've been shut out over the years and they probably feel that they will not be listened to as it has been in the past.

Although most influential people did not assess the degree of influence Indian people were able to exert in affecting Scofield's program and policy, they did feel the Indian Community was not really involved in such decision-making. Unfortunately, only one respondent discussed the role and responsibility Indian parents should maintain in the education of their children.

Do you feel that Indians should be involved in important decisions regarding the education of their children?

Parents have an important view from their experience, and from what they've learned through the environment they live in, their fiscal situation, and the education needs for their children...I think if the parents were more involved, the students would be more involved. I think school boards and so forth are probably part of the upper middle class society, they're not involving disadvantaged people in decisions as far as the school is concerned. As far as development of curriculum, I think they should be contacted there, about the various policies the school's operating under, student control, student discipline. I think this is vitally important in that area. I think if the parents were more involved, you'd probably have better cooperation between the communities and the schools, you probably wouldn't have all this disruption in the schools.

The respondent predicted parental desire for a voice in the educational process; the school system's failure to educate their children would lead to the establishment of an all Indian school, operated by Indian people.

What degree of responsibility for Indian education do you believe should be held by parents, the school board, the state board, the tribal council, and federal authority?

Well, I think most of the authority for this should be with the parents because they're the ones that are probably most concerned, most involved with students, and probably can see best what would be of interest to the kids to keep them in school. I find that one thing has come up with parents, that Indian parents are looking forward to having an Indian school. This might be discriminatory in practice, but in actuality I think it probably would be best if we hope to achieve a more educated Indian people.

From what I've noticed here (the school would take students) from junior high through senior high. I think with what they get out of senior high they could pretty well adjust and probably are able to cope with a lot of things they'll run into, like college or vocational school or whatever it would happen to be.

Influential Person's Assessment of Urban Indian Problems and their Affect on Indian Education

Family Problems

Influential people considered the major problem of Indian people as economic. The primary factor contributing to poverty was diagnosed as lack of job training.

Poverty is the biggest problem.

Poverty, non-competiveness (are the major problems). Many are not trained for jobs. They need vocational skills. Many have reading and writing problems, they may be able to do the job, but unable to fill out the application for it. When I was the work program coordinator at South I went to homes to get kids up for work or school. They live in extreme poverty, many homes were not clean--maybe they need help with housekeeping or tips. This is due to their socio-economic status, not because they are Indians. Maybe the mother is working or over-worked; they need help.

Their major problems are finding jobs, surviving in an urban industrial society, being recognized for their own worth, and getting an education and the necessities of life.

Employment is the number one problem. There is no job training on reservations.

Data indicative of respondents' attitudes toward Indian family life is sparse, however, its implications are provocative (Data was available for five persons). Over half (67%) felt Indian parents treated their children with "love and respect equal to that given white children by their parents." One respondent (17%) was convinced that Indian people were incompetent when dealing with practical matters. The belief that "Indian people tend to let other people take advantage of them too much of the time" was affirmed by half of the respondents; one felt this was not the case, while another was undecided. Although one influential person viewed Indian children as "more brave and courageous than white children," sixty-seven percent thought the statement was not true.

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	<u>Neither</u>
Indian parents treat their children with love and respect equal to that given to white children by their parents	4		1
Indian people are not competent concerning practical things	1	4	
Indians tend to let other people take advantage of them too much of the time	3	1	1
Compared to white children, Indian children are brave and courageous	1		4

Value Conflict

A value conflict between aspects of Indian culture and the school (as a representative of white culture) was articulated by eighty-three percent (5) of the influential people. Interview data clearly shows

their perception of the problems value conflicts create in attempting to educate Indian children. Questionnaire data is less illuminating. Over half (67%) of the respondents recognized a "conflict between what most Indian parents teach their children and what the school tries to teach them." One was undecided. Yet only one influential person believed that it was "often necessary for teachers to counteract what the Indian child is taught at home so as to prepare him to live in today's American society;" one-third were undecided, and one regarded the statement as false. A respondent felt that regardless of the school's efforts, "the culture of Indian children impeded their learning." Half disagreed. (No one believed tribal religious beliefs handicapped Indian children's learning abilities.) One possible response to the perceptions of value conflict would be to encourage Indian children to become "more independent of parental control." Two (1/3) influential people did not know if this approach was desirable or undesirable, but most felt it was undesirable.

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Unde-</u> <u>cided</u>	<u>Disa-</u> <u>gree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>disagree</u>
There is a conflict between what most Indian parents teach their children and what the school tries to teach		4	1		
It is often necessary that a teacher must counteract what the Indian child is taught at home so as to prepare him to live in today's American society		1	2	1	
The teacher should not encourage Indian students in becoming more independent of parental control		3	2		
	<u>True</u>		<u>False</u>		<u>Neither</u>
Tribal religious beliefs impede the learning ability of Indian children			2		3
No matter what we do in school, the culture of Indian children impedes their learning	1		3		1

Indian students encountered value conflict in many aspects of the school situation. Influential people viewed the conflict as creating numerous educational problems for Indians--poor self-image, the relevance of school, prejudice, poor student-staff relationships, lack of interest in school, a high dropout rate and discipline and behavior problems. Three respondents discussed the effect differing values had on the high Indian dropout rate:

Economic insecurity, inadequacy, fear, disinterest in the kind of schools and teachers, etc., create the high dropout rate.

I don't know (what causes the dropout rate) for sure. The only thing I can figure is the thing about relevance to the Indian child's future and I suppose their inferior feelings they have toward themselves and their future.

Indian students quit because school isn't relevant. People don't care if they're there or not.

Two influential people discussed the dropout rate in the context of problems encountered in school situations and their relationship to poverty and a value conflicts.

Indian students are generally not quiet or withdrawn in this generation so much. We still have them, but another group is completely out of their shells. To discuss personal matters I've got to go after them. Sometimes they complain about teachers. Often they won't speak up, we need more time and patience with them. We are just too busy most of the time. Generally the cause of dropping out is a defeatist attitude, a general feeling that they won't get a job whether they finish school or not. Prejudice contributes. There are constant road blocks in everyday life--some Indians may not be aware of, maybe I'm even contributing to them. Indians do not value materialistic ideas, if you like something they have, they will give it to you. They may be laughing at our hangups about materialistic things, because we get ulcers and gray hair. When you take the living conditions background of students, there is a correlation. Lots of them still have ties to the reservation they take off when things get bad here. There are so many factors, individual tribes and individual people. You need a skilled person to see this. Their outlooks and value systems are different.

To some extent I would say (Indian students have a rougher time in school than other students do). You'll probably find that most of the Indian students are not too verbal when they start junior high school or even school, and they'll sit back and wait for their chance and then they won't participate. They don't volunteer information, like the rest of the students in the class will. I think they're probably more introverted in that respect. Then, too, we'll find a number that are quite extroverts and they can get along quite well.

Do you think that some of the problems you mentioned in educating Indian students are related to some of the other problems that Indians have, like socio-economic problems?

I believe that a lot of this is true. I think a student that does not have the materials or the school supplies that he needs, also might have problems where his clothes are concerned, he might not be as well dressed as the other students. This plays a big part as far as the student is concerned when he gets to know himself and identify himself with the other students. He compares himself with them. I also think that if the parents do, or if the father does have a full-time job and is working steady, this will probably be an inspiration for the student to try to achieve. These all contribute to the high dropout rate. I think they mentioned about 64% in the Minneapolis school system.

Indian students in the educational Situation

Sixty-seven percent (4) of the influential felt most Indian youth were reluctant to participate in the classroom situation. Three indicated that Indian children were "shy and lacked confidence " in the classroom. [This data is from the questionnaire.] The behavior of Indian children was regarded as conforming--they are "well behaved and obey rules"--according to one-third of the respondents; half (including two principals) considered the statement as neither true or false. While none of the influential people felt Indian pupils would rather "have a good time than work to get ahead," half (including two principals) gave ambivalent responses to the possibility. Only one-third of the respondents attributed to Indian youth a high motivation for learning. Principals either felt this was not the case, or gave ambivalent responses.

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	<u>Neither</u>
In the classroom, Indian children are shy and lack confidence	3		2
Indian children are well-behaved and obey rules	2		3
Indian pupils would rather spend their time having a good time than working hard to get ahead		2	3
Indian children are eager students with a highly developed desire to learn	2	1	2

Three influential people discussed aspects of the school situation which were liked and disliked by Indian students. None of them felt strong academic interests characterized Indian students. One respondent considered "association with peers" as the best-liked aspect; two mentioned art. All agreed that phy-ed was most unpopular; a principal reported "some kids refuse to go." Two people regarded Indians as non-competitive. Conflicting views of Indian students reactions to discussing their cultures in the classroom were expressed - one respondent felt such discussions were welcomed by students, and made them more interested in subject matter; another respondent felt these situations were "embarrassing to Indian kids."

Indian children in elementary grades like recess best. In junior high art; the ninth grade art classes especially like beadwork. The subject they like best depends upon individual talents. They like social studies when Indian culture is studied, or times when they have an opportunity to explain their culture. Maybe gym is their least favorite. They dislike speaking in front of the room, but most kids feel this way. They like to do crafts!

Indians enjoy the association with peers, better than anything at school. They don't tell me what they like, but they seem to dislike phy-ed. From what I've heard they say they don't like to appear in front of the groups for reports or recitation. Yes, many times Indians are non-competitive, but anxious to please. They look for approval and listen well. In office contact they are sometimes quiet and at other times they are not. Indian students are just as able and willing as other students. In social studies where they discuss Indian Wars, it may be embarrassing to Indian kids.

Teacher-Student Relationship

Four influential people, (67%) felt the school system contributed to the difficulties Indian children experienced at Scofield. They were convinced that teachers did not know how to communicate effectively with their Indian students. (Two other respondents did not disagree, but were undecided.)

Teachers of Indian children don't really know how to communicate with these pupils.

Strongly Agree	2
Agree	2
Undecided	2
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

Two influential people illustrated the communications difficulties which occur between students and teachers.

The teachers don't understand the non-competitive attitude of some Indian children. When a student doesn't volunteer, it's difficult to tell whether he knows the answer or not.

Another influential person regarded teachers' inability to relate to Indian students as the major problem in Indian education.

I think mainly it's that the teacher is not able to relate to the student. The student probably feels that the teacher does not care for him, he is not showing interest in him.

He also felt the school structure created problems for Indian youth:

Problems occur possibly because of the school structure, and possibly because he's Indian and I think this teacher does not know how to reach him. They attend school quite regularly.

They come in the front door and they go out the back door. But attendance in classes is something else. I would say it depends basically on the teacher in the classroom, the material they have in the classroom and I think another strong feeling here is the peer group in the classroom which is not conducive for a learning situation.

Does it seem to you like in a school like Scofield the teachers are frustrated with the Indian kids because they don't attend class, and they don't respond when the teacher wants them to and the kids are just as frustrated with the teacher, the books, and the fact that it doesn't seem to relate to them?

I would say that this is very true, you would understand the teacher's standpoint on this and I think you could see the student's part also. I think the happy medium on this is something we'll have to work for. I'd say one of the things now that, getting back to the economic part of this, we find that the students are looking forward to getting a job and working. They can't see the relevancy of the school to a job in the future. They look ahead four or five years and it's hard for them to visualize this time going quite so rapidly, and later on for them to be getting a job.

He criticized the communication failure between Scofield and Indian parents:

I would say there is very little effort on the part of the school to involve Indian parents. I know they do have teacher-aide programs, where they hire parents, but I think it has to go beyond that. More whole-hearted efforts should be placed in this area.

Two influential People Acknowledged Prejudice Toward Indian Students as a Problem at Scofield.

I think there possibly is prejudice at Scofield. There are a few teachers in the school who are, and I think that discrimination from the other students occurs quite a bit, especially from the blacks. I think they probably discriminate more against other people than other people do against them, the way it appears to be. I would say that by working with the people (in the schools) we can do away with a lot of the prejudice.

Prejudice at Scofield contributes (to Indian students' problems). There are constant roadblocks in everyday life--some Indians may not even be aware of, maybe I'm even contributing.

Discipline Problems

Sixty-seven percent (4) of Scofield's influential people felt truancy was the major discipline problem with the Indian population.

One respondent felt "being on time" was an equally important problem.

He also discussed the poor principal-student relationship and Indian students' growing attraction to "red power."

There are problems with attendance and being on time. As assistant principal, many students don't discuss anything with us. They don't feel free to tell me. I get involved when there's been a fight outside that gets brought into school. I hear about powwows, and dances but not necessarily from Indian kids. They have no special discipline problems, but the methods of dealing with them are different; you only make a mistake once--then you lose their confidence. They are getting loud and boisterous, they are no longer quiet. In the last year and a half they have gotten louder than the average student. Maybe a little of this is due to militant Red Power. Some agencies are quite militant and are telling us what they think of school.

Indians are getting more disruptive now, they feel more proud to be Indian and they are not so withdrawn as before.

Certainly these problems were frustrating to Scofield's staff, and are a very effective means for Indian youth to voice their displeasure with the school.

Ideas for Improving Indian Education

All influential people made recommendations for changing aspects of Indian education. They felt the needs of Scofield's Indian students could be met by making education relevant to their lives. However, "making education relevant" necessitates many transformations in school structure, teaching techniques, relationships between the education staff and Indian parents and students, modification of existing programs and development of new projects. Unfortunately most respondents offered vague

suggestions; a few had concrete ideas for implementing change. Perhaps one respondent correctly assessed the frustration of Scofield's influential people: "I don't know what Indian students need most in their education. If I knew the answer, I'd be way ahead. The relevance of education to the kid's life is the key."

Curriculum and Structure

Although influential people agreed that Indian history and culture should be taught at Scofield, only two respondents were concerned with other aspects of curriculum development:

No two schools are alike, so curriculum should be done to meet the needs of the students in the community. In the last three years we have had summer programs to rate the curriculum. This summer will be the first year we haven't had it. We should set time aside Saturdays or summers.

Indians should be used to develop curriculum.

One respondent suggested that education be made relevant to the "needs of individuals and the structure itself become individualized."

Teachers

The lack of teacher effectiveness with most Indian children concerned the influential people. They all recommended a method--academic or non-academic--for preparing teachers to work with Indian children. Only two respondents felt the training should be compulsory. Half (3) felt Indian people would be the most effective instructors:

Special teacher training is needed to improve appreciation of Indians.

There should be Indian culture courses for teachers after school. These should be compulsory. Parents and community resources should be used to talk about Indian culture. We often get the "Indian expert".

Cultural differences should be taught to teachers so should differences in values. Teachers have to know the true history of Indians and they have got to meet and get to know Indian people.

Sensitivity training and knowing about Indian background are needed. You don't get it at the University of Minnesota in normal course work. We need a course here run by Indian educators in teaching Indian youth.

Along with the courses, possibly teachers need some background in history and culture, to try to understand why certain events in history did take place. But also, getting involved with the Indian people and getting to know the Indian people and having Indian people accept them is important. This past summer in Indian Upward Bound we provided some means where the teachers could do this. We used some teachers from a school system where the students go to school during the academic year. I'm sure they developed some sort of a rapport, some sort of an understanding with these children. We are anxious to see how this comes out this fall.

There were no (classroom) Indian teachers at Scofield. This concerned two respondents. One regarded Indian teachers as considerably more effective with Indian youth and thought efforts should be made to hire Indian teachers at Scofield.

What Indians need most in education is a sense of direction. There are not many models they can look up to, for example in the last one hundred years there has been one Indian doctor. They need to see other Indians who are successful who they can look up to.

We've noticed the past two summers (that the Indian staff)... levels with the kids, and that students accept what they say whereas I think that the run-around the kids received from the whites in the past makes them very apprehensive about the white structures and teachers.

Parental Involvement

Four influential people made suggestions for increasing parental involvement in the educational process. One respondent viewed Indian administrators and parental education as the most effective program for encouraging parental involvement:

Indian administrators would probably provide an avenue where many parents could contact the school. They probably would have someone there that would listen to them...One of the first steps the schools could take would be trying to educate the parents and tell them why the schools are run the way they are and (explain) the responsibilities of the teachers, the administration, the secretaries, the janitors, the cooks--whatever they happen to be--and the school structure itself. I think they'd be interested in knowing about it. And then I think there are other academic areas or some other area that the parents or the community would be interested in.

Less detailed suggestions were offered by two respondents:

We need to use the community more and we need parent education in connection with the value of education for their children.

The principal seeks advice from teachers and co-workers. There is a Concerned Parents Group at Scofield, but it doesn't have Indian participation. Minneapolis needs community involvement in schools. The schools now imitate business and the military.

Mutual cooperation between parents and teachers would increase parental involvement, according to one influential person:

Home room teachers should be more open to the necessity of home visits. An evaluation between teacher and parents, not just a report card, is needed. A mother's club led by mothers should be started. There should be more Indian parents as teacher aides. Teachers must know the family background of their students in order to better help the child.

Programs

Two influential people discussed the positive effects special programs had or could have on Indian students. One respondent discussed the success of Scofield's teacher aides and group work programs:

I have fifteen ninth graders who are teacher aides; some are potential dropouts. This program helps them stay in school. Group work, beading and going to Powwows also help because some are ashamed of being Indian.

Another person felt an all Indian school would be best for Indian youth who would "achieve a more educated Indian people...."

If the need arises where it's best for people to segregate for the betterment of the students, I think this should be allowed to happen.

Indian Upward Bound and its Affects

Indian Upward Bound is a unique project designed to help Indian youth in school. The program began in the 1968-69 school year. Indian Upward Bound is independent of the Minneapolis Public School System but works with it.

The goals of Indian Upward Bound are to help Indian youth and make advantageous changes in the school system:

Indian Upward Bound works with the kids who have the most problems at home and in school. We try to provide a finer mechanism whereby we increase the interest of the students in school, improve their school attendance, class attendance, class participation, and help them see some value in education and achieve more than they have in the past. We're working with junior high school students to develop interest so they go on to high school, otherwise most of them probably drop out when they're sophmores or when they're 16 years old. Individual assessment of Indian children and an emphasis on Indian identity are the basic means used to create interest in school. We try to provide or find some interest that the student might have that is connected with the school. After last year this past summer, we found there are a few things all students like. One of these is arts and crafts, we substitute this instead of the art class in the school curriculum. This keeps the interest of the student in the class and we try to show how the other subject material can revolve around a particular thing. I also feel that some type of recreation, sports, music, whatever it happens to be, something a student can do well, feel satisfied in doing, can be used to relate to other subjects.

I think self-identification (especially that) achieved this summer (1969) helped the students an awful lot. They were

together, they were all Indian, the staff was I would say 90% Indian, and the discrimination that they ran into this summer helped to make them aware that they are Indian, and they're not going to get away from this. They started taking more pride in being an Indian, rather than somebody just telling them the stereotypes such as calling them drunken Indian or that Indians are lazy. They found out that they are not, they know they're not. They found that they can put up with prejudice. They are learning to deal with the pressures that they're going to have to put up with.

The program at St. John's was partially successful. The type of attitude that we saw being developed at St. John's was positive, not only for the student himself, but also his feelings about education. When the students first went up there, they were not too well received but mainly this was part of the attitude they had after leaving the urban situation--the setting of Scofield and Franklin Junior High school--basically in the urban, ghetto area. The change that the students made was tremendous. We almost see this happening over night. Day by day there was a remarkable improvement on the part of the students, their attitudes and their behavior. I'd say that, from this standpoint it was quite successful. I'm anxious to see what will happen this fall, we realize that some of the students will regress to the old ways that they were in before.

The program made efforts to increase teachers' awareness of Indian youth and their problems:

We are trying to institute change in the schools, we provide an arts and crafts class, factual material for the teachers on Indian history and Indian culture, and we're providing not only material that can be used in the classroom, but also in seminars for the teachers, to sensitize them toward the Indian and make them more aware of what the Indian really is.

Last year about 75% of the people who conducted the seminars were Indian. This year I imagine it will be about 98%. I think the teachers get more from the seminars and are more attentive to the Indian speakers.

Indian Upward Bound is controlled by an Indian community board and staffed primarily with Indian people.

The parents and some other interested Indian people in the community run the program. About two-thirds of the board of directors are parents of children we have in the program. They see as far as implementing the program where certain areas should be stronger, contacting the parents, trying to get more parents involved---this is one of the hardest things we've run against and we're still having problems trying to find some area where the parents will become interested. As far as the prospective students are concerned, we're vitally concerned with the criteria to use in selecting prospective students. We do have tutor-counselors who work with the students. Some come from the University, some are parents, some of them are former high school dropouts who now see the need for education and are coming back and trying to help others along with helping themselves and they're also trying to receive their high school diplomas and trying to get into college.

Background Of Data From The Central School Structure

Questionnaires and a cover letter explaining the national study were sent to many Indian and Non-Indian people who had an interest in Indian education in Minneapolis. Included were Central Administration and School Board of Minneapolis, Urban Coalition, Indian people on education committees, and members of organizations serving Minneapolis Indians-AIM, Upper Midwest, etc. Unfortunately, only three questionnaires were returned, and none of the respondents were Indian. Two people were administrators in the Minneapolis school system (a school board director and assistant director of the school of social work). The third respondent was an educational specialist for the Urban Coalition. The degree of authority each person held in relationship to the education of Indian children varied. Clearly, the board director had the most direct influence since he described his position as an educational "policy maker." The social work director did not indicate the degree of authority she possessed but her contacts were with the staff of the Minneapolis Public Schools. Although he had no actual authority and operated outside the school system, the education specialist had contact with Indian education through "cooperation and services rendered to Indian and non-Indian action groups working in the area of education."

Assimilation Attitudes

Although influential people did not overtly state assimilation positions (nor were they asked to in the questionnaire), two respondents strongly implied their opinions on assimilation. One felt Indians "need to become a part of the mainstream," and for this reason, should not have their own schools. The other was interested in Indian education because he wanted to help:

Increase educational opportunities for American Indian students within the Minneapolis Public Schools, to foster and safeguard the unique cultural inputs of American Indians within that school system.

Evaluation of the School

Influential people's assessment of the Minneapolis goals of Indian education and their degree of success in meeting these goals varied. However, only one respondent felt Minneapolis public schools were successfully educating Indian children:

To the best of my knowledge the MPS have no distinct 'Indian education' policy. There does exist an American Indian advisory council. Like other school systems there appears to be very little management by objectives.

You may obtain detailed information (on the goals of Indian education) from our superintendent of schools in Minneapolis. I think our school staff is doing a good job. The part of the staff's job (and their goal) is trying to keep Indian youngsters in school.

The goal is to present the history and culture of the Indian accurately, with dignity. The schools are successful spasmodically.

Problems of Indian Education

All respondents agreed that the school system's failure to meet the needs of Indian Students contributed to the problems of Indian education. These "failures" included uninteresting curricula, staffs' inability to communicate with Indian youth, and over-all inadequacy of schools. Two people felt culture conflict produced educational problems, and that economic problems were also related to the difficulties Indians encountered in schools:

The problems of Indian education are related to their economic problems. I would 'guess' to make subject matter interesting enough to keep them in school is a problem.

Deep cultural alienation, pedagogy, expectations, reward system designed to meet the needs of White Middle Class students are problems. Indian students share the brunt of the inadequacy of schools to serve the poor in Minneapolis. Indian students appear to have difficulty functioning in the school system with a reward system emanating from the Protestant Ethic.

Problems are created by staff attitudes, they lack understanding of the history and culture of Indian children. There are problems the Indians have in relating to the urban area and the majority culture. The Indian culture is very different and poorly understood. Many Indians are economically disadvantaged.

Two respondents characterized Indian students' attitudes toward education:

Alienation from the games schools play in America.

Indian students reject much of what is offered.

They regarded the facts that Indian students did not do as well as other students and that their dropout rate was higher than that of other Minneapolis youth as failures of the school system:

Indians don't do as well because we do not know how to communicate with them. (They drop out because) they do not respond to what we offer. The dropout rate and achievement tests (indicate Indians don't do as well). The reasons -- poor school services for poor in Minneapolis and (Indian) cultural alienation.

Attendance was the "greatest discipline problem" with Indian students, in the estimation of one respondent. She interpreted the frequency of absences-- "it appears to be a withdrawal--maybe passive hostility" (toward the schools). The other influential people "didn't know" if schools experienced special discipline problems with Indian children.

School - Community Relations

Contact with the Indian Community

While influential people were aware of problems with Indian students in Minneapolis public schools, only one had learned of the problems directly from Indian students and parents, as well as from school staff. Efforts to solve such problems centered around "implementing policy changes," developing staff which would be sensitive to Indian growth,

and "offering assistance to organizations developing Indian education programs within and without the schools:"

I hear about problems from the Superintendent. As a school director in a large school system, I have to rely on the Superintendent and his staff for guidance (in solving problems) in implementing new policy changes that would be helpful to Indian youth.

I hear about problems with Indian children through talks with students, parents, teachers, and administrators. I talk to Indians and non-Indians about these problems, and attempt to help solve them through offering assistance to organizations developing Indian education programs within and without the schools, sensitivity training sessions with teachers and students. To date I have done very little.

I hear about problems from the staff and Indian organizations. I talk about them to the Intergroup Education Department and attempt to solve them through staff development, inter-agency case work efforts, and modifying the school system.

Perception of Indian Parents' Educational Attitudes

Two respondents discussed Indian parents' attitudes toward education.

They want it (education) for their children.

Parents hold suspicion of schools, teachers and administrators.

Indian Community Influence on Education

The respondents regarded the superintendent of schools and the school board as the most influential people in education decision making. One person also felt that educational committees, the state legislature and the Chairman of the Senate Finance committee were most involved. None of the respondents felt Indians were involved at a decision-making level, and one added, "with the exception of the superintendent of schools, I doubt that other (decision makers) have much contact with Indian education."

Indian organizations, especially the Indian Advisory Committee, acting in strictly advisory capacities, were not considered powerful but were helpful in solving problems of Indian education.

Organizations comprised of Indian residents serve in advisory capacities.

The Indian Advisory Committee to the Minneapolis Public Schools is hearing grievances and participating in curriculum design.

Influential people did not regard these organizations as particularly responsive to the desires of Indian people.

In limited ways. They lack consistency in goals, objectives, and strategies. The Advisory Committee of Indian affairs has been the most responsive.

Indians it seems to me have not been demanding enough in terms of asking for help.

I don't know whether organizations are responsive.

Proposed Indian Participation

Indians should always be involved in all aspects of educational decision-making according to two influential people.

Yes. Indians should be involved all the time. There should be adequate mechanisms, for community participation has not been developed for Indians or for anyone else. These mechanisms are particularly important when the community is culturally different from the majority.

Yes. They should have influence all the time in advisory, participatory, and resource roles. The kind of responsibility should be the variable, not degree.

While one of the respondents agreed that Indians should be involved in decision-making, he envisioned their participation as more limited.

The trouble has been that parents have not been too motivated in the past to make their voices heard on matters of school problems.

Recommendations for Improving Indian Education

The influential people realized the Minneapolis school system was not meeting the needs of Indian children and expressed ideas to improve this situation. Among suggestions were: including Indian cultures in the curriculum hiring some Indian teachers; providing opportunities for teachers to learn more about Indian students; increasing the participation of Indian people in decision-making; extending educational opportunities to Indian adults; and enabling more youth to attend college.

Indian Culture and Curriculum

All influential persons agreed Minneapolis schools should include "Indian life" in their curriculum. Two expressed ideas for structuring such knowledge.

The curriculum ought to reflect American Indian life both within and without the majority culture.

Indian life should be included in social studies, history, art, English, wherever and whenever appropriate.

Only one respondent felt Indian languages should be taught in school; two didn't know whether this was desirable.

Indian Teachers

Although they generally endorsed the idea, the influential people's opinions on the desirability of having only Indian teachers for Indian students varied.

Would it be better to have Indian teachers teaching Indian students?

Yes, if we could find them I am sure they would be hired by our school board.

Not necessarily.

Indian students should have both Indian and non-Indian teachers.

Teacher Training

One influential person didn't know if orientation was provided for teachers working with Indian children; another felt there were only "spasmodic" programs. Respondents recommended some type of special training for teachers who worked with Indian children; two made specific suggestions:

All teachers should have an understanding of American Indian life. Teachers of Indian students probably should be given a deeper background in Indian life, needs, etc.

Not training, but staff development about Indian history, culture, etc. is needed.

Increased Indian Participation

While all influential people felt Indian people should have a strong voice in educational decision making, administrative changes were recommended by one respondent.

We need increased Indian participation, more Indians in the administration. North and South-Central Pyramids which might require separate representation of Indians in the councils of those pyramids.

Extending Educational Opportunities to Parents

Influential people endorsed programs for educating Indian adults which would operate through the Minneapolis Public School System. Two course suggestions were made: reading, and "the whole gamut from basic skills to special interest classes."

Increase in Indians Attending College

One respondent didn't know if "enough Indian youth were attending

colleges and universities;" two did not think enough were pursuing higher education and offered suggestions for increasing the numbers.

Improving elementary and secondary school services to Indians. Making campuses open to many life styles and education approaches.

They must be encouraged from pre-school up.

Tentative Conclusions

As this interim report on the education of Minneapolis Indian children has attempted to point out time and again, a central difficulty with the controlling elements of Indian education appears to be a coordinated philosophy of Indian education. A second major problem seems to be an inability to put together workable programs emanating from any appropriate philosophic base useful to the adequate education of Minneapolis Indian children.

Since this report has attempted to indicate the nature of these problems (and others) at many points, we will not belabor them in this interim report. Suffice to say that in the concluding report on the formal education of Minneapolis Indian children, to be published in mid-1971, certain philosophical and programatic dilemmas will be investigated in detail as these relate to the problems of educating Indian children. Interested readers are invited to consult, prior to the release of that concluding report, a document prepared earlier by the Training Center for Community Programs. This document deals somewhat extensively, but in an exploratory fashion, with the problems we have been mentioning here and with some possible alternatives to the continued distress of all concerned with offering the best formal education to Indian children. (See Hammond, Judy, I. Karon Sherarts, Richard G. Woods, and Arthur M. Harkins: Junior High Indian Children in Minneapolis: A Study of One Problem School. Minneapolis: Training Center for Community Programs, University of Minnesota. May, 1970.)

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